

***** * * BMHA Newsletter * * * * * * BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA * * *****



Volume 7, Number 1

Jan/Feb/Mar 1996

NOTEPAD

BMHA is now affiliated with the League of American Bicyclists. The LAB, formerly the LAW, founded in the 1880's, is the leading bicycling advocacy group, and has some 500 cycling clubs affiliated with it. Some of the benefits to BMHA: national publicity for our events, networking with other clubs, insurance for our events, free listing in the *Bicycle USA Almanac*. As our readers know, BMHA is also affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association, the bicycle touring information and advocacy group.

Help Wanted: Bicycle Educators

(Here's your chance to teach what you know about safe cycling, and get paid for it.)

Professional opportunities are available for dedicated cyclists who would like to be involved in the national initiative to bring bicycling education to the general public. This is your opportunity to be compensated while sharing your love of cycling. For information write to: Education Director, League of American Bicyclists, 190 W. Ostend St., Suite 120, Baltimore MD 21230.

When you write a plug for BMHA (and please do!) in your local club's newsletter, be sure to include this information: "The annual dues is \$10. To receive a sample copy of the BMHA Newsletter and other info send an SASE to BMHA, Box 4009-RC, Boulder CO 80306." This will save our club a lot of trouble and expense.

Needed! Two riders for RAAM

(Ride Across America) August '96

If you are 70 PLUS and in condition to join us for our bicycle Ride Across America, our team would like to hear from you! Minimum reqmts: have a dry sense of humor, be tuned in as a team player, and not inclined to suffer from sleep deprivation, and able to ride 100 miles a day at a good clip for 8 days in a row. We also need several crew members---must be over age 25 and available for two weeks of aiding these riders. For info contact: Joe Walker

Fax: 818-774-2083

Write: Box 17867

Encino, CA 91416-7867

(Note: For further details and a story on last year's 70 PLUS RAAM, see Page 3 of the Oct. '95 newsletter.)

BMHA's Western States Roundup is no more!

Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, the Roundup coordinator, reports that lack of attendance at the past two meetings has led to the cancellation of this event. From the beginning the Roundup was handicapped by being scheduled at an inconvenient time in an equally inconvenient meeting room. Thanks, Ken, for the time and effort that you lent to this endeavor. Members, we welcome your ideas for a different approach to a regional meeting for BMHA members.

---Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dayton HamVention--'96

Plans for BMHA's seventh annual Forum are being arranged by Forum co-chairs Bob Pulhuj, KB8ZJ, and Ned Mountain, WC4X. Over the years, members and non-members have enjoyed the speakers and demonstrations of bike-mobile gear and operating techniques. The BMHA Forum, set for May 17 thru 19, regularly draws an audience of a 100 or more. The comments "from the floor" make for a lively exchange of information, as does the daily meeting of the BMHA Lunch Bunch. Speakers, subjects and other details are now being finalized -- watch the next issue for detailed information.

See you at Dayton!

Comments

....I've enjoyed the back issues that you sent me, and I'm going to construct the J-pole antenna. I plan on going on a bicycle tour of Ireland within the next year. Hope to be on the air during the trip. I'll be experimenting with a PVC portable quad on some upcoming tours.

---Paul Rudden, N9UCE, Elk Grove Village, IL

....Many thanks for the back issues. Lots of good information there. I have a 2-meter Realistic HT. I believe that I will use a 5/8 wave antenna with counterpoise rather than a J-pole. I have a speaker-mike and a PTT switch. Just need now to mount it all on my 34-year old English Carlton 10-speed road bike. (I am even older--77--old enough to know better.)

Keep up the good work.

---Doug Tracy, W8YCU, Toledo, OH

More comments on page 8.

HOME BREW

How I Made a Headset for just Ten Bucks

I recently purchased a Labtec headset to use with my Kenwood TH-79A handheld. The earphone worked fine but the audio from the boom mike was too low. On Email's Bikeham list server I got some suggestions for raising the audio level, but none of them worked. So I sent back the Labtec, and set out to make my own headset.

Using Brian's (KBOPRY) idea, I bought a Radio Shack electret microphone element (PN 270-090A) and got started. I cut off one side from an old set of Walkman headphones and then wrapped a 12AWG wire around the headband just above the one remaining earpiece. I cut the length long enough to reach around in front of my mouth and removed some insulation and made a loop in the end. The loop holds the microphone element (and hopefully will help to keep the wire from stabbing me should I happen to take a fall.)

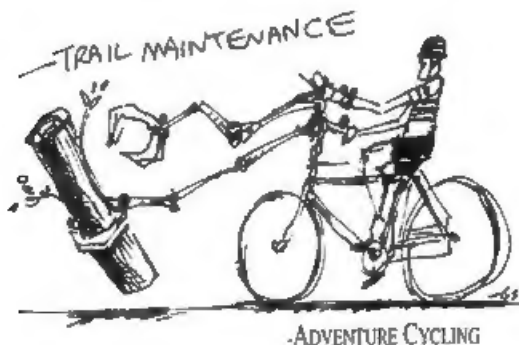
I used a little solder to hold the microphone element in place in the loop and then wired up the terminals. For the "business end" of the microphone element, I cut a small notch into a foam "earbud" cover (to clear the 12AWG wire) and it serves nicely as a windscreen. I used silicone sealant to waterproof the backside wiring connections. The headset fits nicely under my bicycle helmet. The existing helmet foam padding holds it in place. It is a little hard to adjust the microphone position but once it is in the right place it stays without moving around as I ride.

For the Press-To-Talk switch and wiring connections I used a Radio Shack small plastic molded enclosure (PN 270-288) with a small momentary switch. To hold the box to the handlebars I used a jumbo wire clip (PN 278-1641) stuck to the back of the box. I ride a road bike with taped handle bars. The clip, although it doesn't close completely around the handle bar, holds the little switch box wherever I place it.

Since had I already had an old set of headphones and an old TNC/HT cable, the whole project probably cost me less than \$10. I have plans to find a different switch with a larger push button for Release-To-Listen. I also have plans to add two or three small push button switches (with resistors) since my HT (Kenwood TH-79A) has the capability for three remote control buttons for functions such as band selection, power level and call station selection.

—Patrick Lally, KE6SEI

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Irvine, CA 92714 srh97a@prodigy.com



LETTERS

A Report from the Heartland

Dear Hartley and the BMHA:

Just a short (?) note to relay the happenings among the BMHA people in the heartland. Just finished a small (500 riders, 500 miles, one week) organized touring ride, TRIRI---Touring Ride In Rural Indiana. The organizers, Joe and Barb Anderson are both Hams and members of BMHA, so it was no surprise to find a goodly number of Biking Hams present for the ride, about 15, all told. Sorry, I forgot to note down their names and call signs.

Emergency traffic was thankfully nonexistent. There were the usual road rash events: one rider ran out of roadway and ideas simultaneously and trashed her helmet, but thanks to a BMHA rider with the BMHA-required roll of duct tape she rode on. The only serious injury occurred to our Biking Doctor, supplied by Indianapolis Methodist Hospital Emergency Room. In a fit of frustration due to a lack of business, he finished the Friday ride by diving, with bike still attached, directly into the first aid supplies box. Good form, poor judgment, twenty stitches.

BMHA member Barb Anderson N9XSS, made her first radio contact during the event. Her hubby Joe Anderson, N9SYH, made contacts number two through (?). By the end of the week, both were yacking it up like hams are supposed to do.

We had all kinds of antennas. The variety and ingenuity displayed regarding antennas was amazing. There were the usual homemade J-Poles, including one mounted on Ron Cooper WB9DKL's recumbent bike; several variations on the quarter wave replacements for rubber duck antennas; and the stealth technology displayed by Joe Anderson. Joe put the entire handy talkie unit in his handlebar bag. (Joe's theory, he bought the rig for HIS convenience, when he wants to talk he will take the rig out of the bag.)

I experimented with a rubber duck on the rear rack and also tried a ANLI AT-2, 5/8 wave mobile antenna mounted atop a Hustler mast. Great signal, very good attention-getting item, makes it easy to find bike when parked with 500 other bikes at lunch stops, but I had to watch out for low tree branches---this thing tops out at 10 feet above the ground! My usual response to the question "why such a big antenna?" was "state laws don't allow carrying my seventy-foot tower." Ever since I saw a van going to Dayton Hamvention with a bumper-hitch-mounted nine-foot tower and stacked 11-element beam for two meters, I have been tempted to try that on a bike. See you down the log!

—Dave Gerbig, WB9MZZ

3504 Tremont Way
Bloomington, IN 47401

For Sale

Do you have bicycle-mobile-related radio equipment for sale? Send in a description and we'll run it. Limit of 20 words, plus your name, address, phone. For members only.

ANTENNAS

An Effective Two Meter Bike Antenna —After Many Trials!

People who ride their bikes in areas where repeater coverage is great probably don't need to read this article. I could hear the repeater I wanted to use while riding my bike to and from work, but it was not going to respond to my barefoot HT with the supplied "rubber duckie" antenna. It would key the repeater only at the highest points along the route, and even then communication was only possible when I stopped at these points. To see if doubling power was any help, I added an external twelve-volt, two-ampere-hour lead-acid gel-cell battery, carried in a velcro pouch below the top tube, and hooked it to the external power plug on the HT. This raised the transmit power to the five-watt level. But it really was very little better. Then I tried a replacement 19" telescoping whip antenna, which helped only a little.

To make good contact with that repeater some sort of better antenna was needed. The only other choice might be to use an amplifier, but the battery weight for it would make the bicycle hard to ride and no fun! A survey of available commercial antennas showed few suited for a bike. You can't use a mag-mount on a rear rack [because it won't stick to an aluminum rack, and besides it would render your rear rack unusable for carrying luggage —Ed.] but maybe a whip could be mounted on the rear rack.

First Try

I thought I'd try a vertical-J, with the half-wave radiator atop a quarter-wave matching stub. This antenna is a direct descendant of the (horizontal) Zepp, used on the German airships (see: R. Dean Straw, *The ARRL Antenna Book*—(Newington; ARRL, 1994), 17th ed, page 26-4.)

The overall length would be $39 + 19$ or 58 inches tall, and could be mounted by plastic wire clamps to the rear luggage rack of the bicycle. It was formed by cutting the base end off a 102" steel CB whip leaving 78" of whip. Bending the rod 90 degrees at 19" and 20" from the big end finished the antenna. I used a propane torch to heat the steel until it bent easily, when it was just short of red hot. This left a nice J shape with a one-inch spaced 19" matching stub, and 39" of radiator above. One inch spacing was chosen as aesthetically pleasing, not to be any particular characteristic impedance, but interpolating the charts in *The ARRL Antenna Book*, page 24-13, Fig. 18., it appears this would be about 200 ohms.

This was then fed by a 4-to-1 coax balun (page 26-10, Fig. 13) made from a 26" length of RG-58A/U, connected to the feedline, another four feet of coax. Connecting the balun at a point about 4" above the bottom of the antenna resulted in a good 1.1 to 1 match at 144.8 mHz, the desired transmit frequency.

This antenna mounts to the side of the rear rack using plastic wire clamps. It gave a good deal of improvement in signal strength. I operated satisfactorily with this antenna for several months, before trying for something better. But there were still some areas in which my signal dropped out, and "picket fencing" over some of my route to work.

Second Try

The most common automobile antenna for two meters is the 5/8 wave whip over a ground plane. I thought I'd try a 5/8 wave radiator with an open wire matching stub similar to the vertical-J in appearance. It would have greater height and some gain (an "extended" Zepp, page 8-34). Looking in various antenna books, I didn't find any design information for the this kind of antenna, so I took a pair of CB whips and constructed an antenna with a long matching section starting 48" (about 5/8 wave) down from the top of one. I used plastic wire clamps of 5/16" diameter and bolted them together, one around each

clamps of 5/16" diameter and bolted them together, one around each whip, to make spacers which held the rods at one inch spacing. Using a handy metal tie clip for a movable short, I connected the 4-short and point of connection of the balun until there was an impedance match.

The impedance of a 5/8 wave antenna is a complex value, since it is not a resonant length. The 1/2 wave J antenna is resonant, or resistive, so it takes a 1/4 wave shorted stub to match. An unknown (to me) reactance of the 5/8 wave antenna implied the matching section would not be exactly a quarter wave length long. I just hoped what resulted could be mounted in the same way as the original J on the bike. As it turned out, this was exactly the case; the position of the short was 22" from the base of the 48" radiator, and the balun attached 10.5" above the short. Since you may cut off and discard the material below the short, the antenna design was complete. The resulting antenna was made by cutting the 102" whip to 93", and bending 90 degrees, as before, at 22" and 23" from the big end, and mounting the same way on the bicycle.



*Shown here, the bottom of Jim's extended Zepp J.
The other end, topped with a red flag,
reaches eight feet off the ground.*

The antenna is now 70" long and looks like a vertical-J for a somewhat lower frequency! This antenna has even better VSWR bandwidth than the original J, and signal reports have been favorable—still some fading, but much less picket-fencing. Compared to the 1/2 wave J, it is taller, and the high-current radiating portion is moved higher (by a foot). There is also gain from the pattern, a narrower main lobe. It could even be taller, and still not hit trees. It looks better than the white fiberglass flagpoles on some bikes and you can fly a red triangular flag to aid visibility in traffic!

—Jim Speck, KK5BX

3117 NW 62nd St.

Oklahoma City OK 73112

GETTING STARTED

Column conducted by Bil Paul, KD6JUI

A Look At Ham Radio's Exciting Possibilities

(Our BMHA editor is a persistent son-of-a-balun and my excuses of working on an addition to my home have drawn to a close because it's 95 percent finished. So here I begin a series of columns on Getting Started in bicycle hamming. I'll draw on my own limited experiences and what I know other hams have done. I want to say right off that my technical knowledge is limited and that my chief interest is antennas.)

I think that many of you in the "getting started" category are bicyclists first, and are later adding ham radio to the mix. You may have been a fan of AM-FM broadcast radio. There may have been some usage of portable radio receivers in your past, whether using the built-in speaker or headphones. At some point many of us get tired of the same old stations and commercials and music and look for something more engrossing. Being able to talk to someone back and forth on radio fits the bill.

Ham Radio to the Rescue

Then there are some of you who, wanting to be a compleat cyclist or touring person, would like to have a higher level of security in your travels. That might mean a cellular phone or a citizens band radio or a ham radio of some sort. If there's a bad accident, or you need directions, or you're stranded in a blizzard, it's nice to be able to call for help. A cell phone may be out of range, and a CB radio is not too practical when out of urban areas (and besides there are all those fuzzy characters on CB), so a ham radio can be a real asset in those situations—but even ham radios are no guarantee of getting out.

Let me tell you some ways that I've used ham radio along with cycling. The most common is using a walkie-talkie (often referred to as an HT, or handy-talkie) for talking with local hams while commuting to work. You can also use them for receiving weather reports. In some areas, you can even use them to dial up telephone numbers, making them a quasi-telephone. I've never used them for that purpose, though, because I usually have my cell phone with me.

Last summer on the annual tour that I lead along the Pacific Crest Bicycle Trail, one of our touring partners had an accident that left his front wheel badly bent out of shape. We were able to call with our ham walkie-talkies and find out from a local ham where the nearest bike shop was and when it would be open. In the remote area we were in, our ham walkie-talkies worked better than cell phones.

We also use the walkie-talkies (which operate on VHF, or very high frequencies, above the broadcast FM band — 144 Megahertz and higher) to keep in touch with each other when our band of merry cyclo-tourists separates into faster and slower groups.

Ham in Tent Contacts Ham in Europe

Another application has been to take along ham radios which operate on HF (high frequencies, 3 to 30 Megahertz). I use an HF radio to send morse code from campgrounds along the way, after each day's ride. We've reached out as far as

Europe and Asia using this low-power gear (5 watts or less) with wire antennas strung up in trees. (See Bil's articles in back issues, July '94 and April '95. --Ed.) Last summer we had a ham with us who operated on HF with voice transmissions and an antenna on his bike, while riding. The previous year, we had a ham who could send code while riding! Sometimes we use solar panels to charge up batteries while riding during the day.

The thrill of doing this lower frequency hamming is purely the challenge of it all — trying to contact other hams as far away as possible, using the smallest, simplest equipment, with the lowest power, and antennas that try and put as much of that power into the air as possible.

This concludes a brief overview of the possibilities. Next time, I'll talk about ham radio licenses and walkie-talkies (or handy-talkies, or HTs).

If you have any questions about getting started as a ham radio cyclist, I'll try to answer them in the Getting Started column. Send them to me, Bil Paul, 337 Estrella Way, San Mateo CA 94403-2940. My e-mail address is: bilbee@aol.com

BMHA NET....ON 20

TIME: 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.

DATE: 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

FREQ: 14.253 — plus or minus the QRM.

Look for me, NF0N, at those times, and if I'm unable to call the net please look for those who have picked up the net when I've been out of town. In particular, look for Assistant Net Controls Jim Kortge, NU8N, and John Liebenrood, K7RO. Jim covers the East, John covers the West, and I cover the middle.

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, BMHA Net Control

316 E. 32nd St.

S. Sioux City, NE 68776

NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Paul Brandenburg, KB9MEG, 503 E Franklin, Delphi IN 46923
Hank Coffin, KE8MPQ, POB 3331, Santa Cruz CA 95063
Keith Danish, KB2WBL, 12 Cottage Place, Leonia NJ 07805
Alexander Dutkewych, VE3PIG, POB 211, Pulteney NY 14874
Kirk Gustafson, KE8MTF, 3316 W Clark Av, Burbank CA 91505
Charlotte L Johnson, KC5KWI, 1020 Hess Ter, Las Cruces NM 88005
Patrick Lally, KE6SEI, 15291 Reims Circle, Irvine Ca 92714
Gail Lohre, KC5RMN, 1810 Indian School Rd, Garland TX 75044
Art Rippes, KB2DOQ, 848 Midwood Rd, Ridgewood NJ 07450
Paula Romeo, KB9MAJ, 2159 S. Fish Hatchery Rd, Oregon WI 53575
Victor Emanuel, KB9MAH, " " "
Thoman W Welch Jr, 5227 La Cumbre Av, Riverside CA 92505

With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.

NEW HAMS

Two More Members Now Have Tickets!

They hit the books, sweated, and got nervous at the exam site—just as we all did. But they passed! Since the last issue these members have become licensed hams:

Gail Lohre, KC5RMN, Garland, Texas
Katie Ziegweid, KC7NPS Tucson, Arizona

Non-ham BMHAer's, please send in your call sign as soon as you get your FCC amateur radio license. We'd like to list you in this column. If you have time, tell us how and what you studied, what helped you to pass the test. We'll pass it on to our non-ham members who are thinking about taking the exam.

Gail writes:

In the last newsletter you asked how and what was used to help us study for the exams. My husband Robert, KC5HIO, purchased *Now You're Talking* for me a couple of months back. Two weeks before the exam date, during lunch break, I was reading it in the cafeteria when a man came up and commented about the book I was reading. He told me that Glenn Butters, K7YSP, of South Lake, TX, was going to offer a crash course on how to pass the Novice-Tech exams. I got in touch with Glenn and found out the class was to be held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday—October 20, 21, and 22—with the exam to be given Sunday afternoon.

I got involved in this because of my non-biking husband worrying about me when I'm biking. I belong to a bike club and go on their rides, but I'm overweight, and some of the other riders are stronger than I am....in the speed and hill-climbing department. There have been times when I've been left off the back of the pack, not knowing exactly where I was or where the rest of the pack was. So, I agreed to give this class a shot. Thinking that I have my husband's full support on this, I decided to stay in the hotel adjacent to where our classes were to be held. Except for leaving for lunch and dinner, I devoted the entire time to the course.

It must have worked. I missed only two questions on the Novice and four on the Tech. My call sign, KC5RMN, was awarded on October 31 and I should receive the actual paperwork in the mail within a week. Now he wants me to study Morse Code....is there no end? Men, they're never satisfied!

—Gail Lohre, KC5RMN,
1610 Indian School Rd
Garland, TX 75044

Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the twenty one back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.75 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306-4009, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, June 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

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ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Stray" in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile, or while in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NAOA. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our five subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is established as a "regular" at this world-renowned event.

This is the twenty-second issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 12 new members. The total membership now stands at 455, with members in 42 states, and six countries.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, packet and E-mail address lists, bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

My Twenty-Two Year Challenge

Twenty-two years ago, when I was a much younger cyclist, I made my first attempt at long distance, self-contained cycling. I lived in Lincoln, Nebraska at the time and was determined to ride from Colorado Springs, where I had relatives, to Lincoln.

Of course, this was back in 1973 in the days when cycling gear such as helmets, cycling shorts, shoes, gloves, and shirts were almost unheard of. All I had on my side was youth, (I was 30) determination, and stupidity. This was a 500+ mile trip and something I had never even considered in my wildest dreams. With my wife's words of "dumb", "why?", "stupid", and "Don't call me if you have trouble", I planned and trained for the trip. This was going to be my crowning achievement in my young life.

I left Colorado Springs on a warm evening, fully loaded with 40 pounds of gear, sleeping bag, maps, and enthusiasm. This was in the middle of July, so nightfall was a few hours away. As I pedaled east from Colorado Springs I realized by looking at the map that there is NOTHING east of Colorado Springs for over 150 miles. No problem, I had good strong legs, a bike light and extra battery, and lots of time off work. I pedaled through the night and around 3 am arrived at a little place called Punkin Corner—tired, thirsty, and hot. Nothing there but a concrete slab with a metal open air cover over it. Since I had covered nearly 80 miles, this was a good stopping point. Laying out my sleeping bag, I closed my eyes praying the rattlesnakes would leave me alone. I slept quick waking up only 3 hours later at 6 am sunup.

Heading east toward a small town I stopped at a gas station for some water. Someone pointed out the thermometer. It read 110 degrees! I drank another bottle of water quickly for some reserve. I finally arrived at the Kansas border. Another 50 miles to a town for the night. I had ridden well over 100 miles that day in the 100+ heat. I found a park and slept under a park bench that night. I was proud and feeling great so far. But during the middle of the night something woke me up. It felt like someone was sticking needles in my Achilles tendon. Finally the pain subsided and I went back to sleep. Unfortunately this was the beginning of the end of my adventure.

The next day the pain returned and worsened on each pedal turn. By nightfall the pain had almost become unbearable. Was my journey ending? My final day I was able to pedal into Minden, Nebraska, 200 miles short of my goal. My mother who lived about 100 miles from Minden came and drove me back to Lincoln. Incidentally, my mother was more worried about this trip than my XYL! And so ended my attempt at long distance self-contained cycling in 1973.

22 Long Years Later

So here it is 1995, and all during those 22 years I planned to re-do the trip, just to prove that I could do it. Finally in 1995 I decided to do it! But why stop at 500 miles? Surely I could do 700. I now live about 125 miles north of Lincoln, Nebraska in South Sioux City, Nebraska. My plan was to start again in Colorado Springs, follow much of the original route, and ride 700 miles to my home. Not only beats the original

distance by 200 miles, but here I am, 52 and a bit wiser and probably in better condition.

Although I still had my original bicycle, my Lightning recumbent held more charm. For 6 months I planned and re-planned the trip. Of course now I have this fancy computer with the Delorme Mapping software. I printed out a map of each town I would pass through. I laid out much of the original route on the map and plotted my course. I even used Excel to chart each day's mileage and to set a plan that I did actually use. I planned to rent a car in Sioux City to drive to Colorado Springs; I discovered it was cheaper to rent a car one-way rather than fly with the bike.

One thing you have to do when planning a trip of this magnitude is to pack your bags. Not only did I pack the bags 100 times, I weighed, banded, itemized, inventoried, and test-drove them. I did make a major change from the original trip: rather than use panniers on the bike itself, I purchased a one-wheel trailer called B.O.B., or Beast Of Burden. After a weekend trial with it fully loaded, I decided to use the trailer. I could carry 40 pounds quite easily and the recumbent handled a little better than when it was carrying the gear in panniers.



Mike at the finish, with BOB on the back.

My plan was to start on Labor Day weekend and complete the trip in 9 days or less. That allowed for an average of 75-80 miles a day. Well within my range. The time arrived. I rented the car at the Sioux City airport, brought it home and loaded the bike, trailer, and all the gear into the car within an hour. I had 24 hours to get to the Colorado Springs airport to keep the car rental to a one day rate. Price was essential here.

I scouted the route all the way into Kansas. No problem until I hit the road that was parallel to the interstate. Gravel, for a 40-mile stretch! Recumbent pulling a trailer on loose gravel would never work. I made some notes on the map as to an alternate route. Nice roads for the rest of the trip. Lots of shouldered road and nice fresh blacktop. I arrived at the Col. Spgs. airport about noon on Saturday. It was a nice warm day with a West wind—and I was headed East! Perfect!

I dropped off the car and on the parking lot started to put my bike together. Naturally it attracted attention. You don't see too many Lightning P-38 recumbents with a trailer being put together in too many airport parking lots. An hour later I was

heading out of the airport and beginning my journey. I had packed lots of water as I knew the nearest water might be more than 125 miles east. The wind was to my back, weather was warm, nice shoulder on the road, body in the best of condition, and the trip was beginning just great. Nothing could go wrong. Wrong! An hour out of the airport, I noticed some clouds to my back. Did I hear thunder? It was one of those summer showers moving through. Fortunately a small town was just a few miles ahead and it was time to have lunch anyway. Lucky for me, there was a canopy at the restaurant so the bike and gear would be dry. Took my time to eat until the small shower passed. Believe it or not, that was the only rain I encountered the whole trip.

I pedaled until nearly dark and arrived at the place called Punkin Corner. Strangely enough, I slept on the same concrete slab I slept on 22 years earlier. Only this time I slept nine hours and was feeling just great. Awakening at dawn I looked forward to a nice long day of at least 90 miles. I still had lots of water, energy, and enthusiasm. All day long I pedaled my way east following the same route of 22 years prior. It was the same as before---hot, dry, little traffic, just myself and the bike.

I arrived at Cheyenne Wells hot, tired, and thirsty but all systems were still GO! A motel looked good that night. I could have a beer, get a shower, and some needed rest. Plus the price was only \$25. The Achilles was feeling great so far.

Well rested, I continued east the next day. On into Kansas I rode. Traffic was light as it was now into September and vacations were over for most people. Plus who in their right mind would be going east from Colorado Springs? West maybe into the mountains but not east into Kansas!

At the end of day three, the Achilles was still OK and everything was doing great. No flats, great roads, drivers friendly, my dream was coming true. Stayed at an RV park that night and had a great time. Good fresh start for the next day. Had a shower, good meal, and washed some grungy, sweaty clothes. I was ready for the next day.

On I pedaled, north towards Nebraska and Minden. Minden was my primary goal as that was where it ended 22 years ago. Over the next two days I averaged 90 miles a day arriving in Minden at the end of day 5. Well, I did it, and it

wasn't all that difficult this time. Maybe age does have something to do with it after all. The Achilles still felt great. I celebrated with a beer and a nice meal. Rewarded myself with another night in a cheap motel. The next day I celebrated with a walking tour of Minden's famous Pioneer Village. If you really want to get a feel for the history of our country, visit the Pioneer Village. It is a rewarding experience and the cost is just \$5.

Well rested and ready to roll the next day, I headed towards Aurora, NE, my XYL's home town. The XYL had spent a week visiting her brother in Wyoming and had arrived at her folks' house the same day as I did on my funny looking bicycle. I stayed that night and part of the next day as I wanted to watch the Nebraska Cornhuskers play on TV that Saturday. But reality set in and I felt the urge to complete the final 180 miles to home. Over the next 3 days I averaged 60 miles a day. Actually it was anti-climatic as I had no problems, no flats, good roads, nice drivers, and mostly tailwinds. Where's the fun in that?

I arrived home at noon on day 9, as I planned. I did it! The Achilles (my worst fear) felt great! The bike and trailer worked fantastic! The goal was reached 22 years later!

I didn't make many ham contacts on this trip, just did some chatting with some small town hams along the way. But I regularly used my HT to listen to weather bureau reports, especially wind direction. When only 20 miles from home I fired up the HT, brought up the phone patch on my local repeater, and made a phone call to my wife.

You have to prove to yourself at times that you can accomplish a goal. One of my favorite quotations is "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. Don't make a fool out of yourself." In this case I didn't succeed the first time, tried again, and succeeded. Now that I have accomplished my 22 year goal, I am planning for another cycling goal. I haven't yet determined exactly what it is but I plan to achieve it. Setting and obtaining your goal is one way to enhance your quality of life and I'm a firm believer in setting goals.

Maybe a cross-country trip is in order! Anyone want to try it?

—Mike Nickolaus, NFOU

316 E. 32nd St.

South Sioux City, NE 68776

Membership Application

MemAPL3.wpa 7/25/96 /pc /newmem /pac /E-mail /newHAM /NONham /news /Q's /rest /walc /wtr
BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA date _____
Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306

Individual \$10 _____ new member? _____ renewal? _____
(US or Canada)

Family \$15 _____ Foreign \$15 _____ Donation \$ _____
(limit: two persons)

Make check payable to BMHA, in US dollars or international money order.

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Age _____ Most miles bicycled in one day _____

BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

More Comments

...I lead trips across America and around the perimeter of Florida every year. In the hope that BMHA members can help on this summer's trip, I intend to contact those who live along our route. I personally look forward to getting a radio for my bike, getting licensed, and joining you all.

—Judy Bowman, Executive Director,
Wheel Power Christian Cyclists, Lynchburg, VA

...The one thing I often see as a truck driver is many cross-country cyclists loaded with packs cycling down major highways with heavy traffic loads, when I know of paved county roads that would be safer and more enjoyable. I run into problems when I'm cycling in an unfamiliar county of not having a good source of information on the best back roads to take. It would be nice to have a list of local cyclists for different states and/or regions of states, that one could contact by phone, radio, or internet—people who could give personal advice on how to get through their area. *[The League of American Bicyclists offers this service in their annual Almanac. In it most of the states have a list of Ride Information Contacts, people who know the cycling suitability of their local roads. For information on joining, write to: LAB, 190 W. Ostend St., Suite 120, Baltimore MD 21230-3755. Phone (410)539-3399. —Ed.]*

—Bryan Wilkins, KB0SVS, Monona, IA

...In a recent letter KA1FPP/7 was having a little difficulty with a headset on his helmet. Most of our group fasten the headset outside the helmet with nylon tie straps. If it is done carefully, there is still some flexibility for moving the earphone up and down or forward and back to get the best hearing angle. I use two straps now, although on past helmets I have even drilled the headset strap and screwed it to the helmet. I like the tie strap method better.

—Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, Downey, CA

...I am 62 yrs old, have been hamming for 43 yrs and into bicycling for 20 yrs, but have never put the two together! Just bought my first 2-meter HT and I'm anxious to get it mounted on my bike!

—Glenn Hickey, W5VYO, Little Rock, AR

REMINDERS

Your Bicycle Flies For Free!

As a member of BMHA you get free transport of your bicycle, when you fly on Northwest Airlines. You save \$90 on a roundtrip flight. For details call Wild World of Travel, Missoula MT, 1-800-735-7109. Mention that you're a network member of Adventure Cycling.

Make Your Own "J" Antenna

As mentioned in the April '95 issue, Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, has offered to provide detailed instructions for making his famous MOB Stainless "J" Antenna. This is the antenna used by over 40 members of the bicycling wing of the Downey (CA) ARC. Using this antenna on his bike, Ken can hit his base station when he's 100 miles from home—and using only 1.5 watts. You must specify whether you want plans for 144, 220, or 440 MHz. They're \$1 each, postpaid. Write to Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, 9609 Cheddar St, Downey CA 90242. (This offer available to BMHA members only.)

LETTERS

From Our Australian Friend!

Dear Hartley,

First, many thanks for your letter and the back issues of the Newsletter. First I must apologise for the delay in my reply. Your mail arrived just prior to me going overseas on business. At least it was some interesting reading in the plane for a change!

Thank you also for all the information you sent. I'm really surprised at how large & thriving the BMHA organisation is! It seems the group really is on the ascendancy and the enthusiasm of the newsletter is infectious. I must admit that I hadn't really considered radio-operating whilst cycling—which it seems that many of your members do. I was thinking more of carrying radio whilst cycling/touring. But I can see that with the size of modern HT radios going truly mobile is actually achievable.

For my own part, I only got back into cycling four or so years ago. Some colleagues at work challenged me to take part in an annual cycle event from Sydney to Wollongong (98 km). I've now done it four years running! However I'm really just a weekend cyclist. Certainly I'm not in the 100-mile class yet! My last ride was 85 km long — to the west of Sydney — following the Hawkesbury River most of the way. Quite picturesque, although fairly cool at times—it's June and winter is starting here now. (It actually snowed this weekend on the Blue Mountains, near Sydney.)

As requested, have included a photocopy of SPRAT item that provoked me into dropping you a line in the first place.

For the record, I'm 36 years old and work in telecommunications for the main phone company here (Telstra). I'm actually English (a Pom as they say here) having lived here for 10 years now.

Radiowise I listen a lot, but not very active. Living in rented accommodation makes outside antennas a bit difficult—but I have gear for all bands from 1.8 MHz to 430 MHz. I'm interested in homebrew gear and want to get into CW operating! Cyclewise I own a touring bike that I picked up 2nd hand. I bought my wife a mountain bike recently, but she is yet to get hooked on cycling!

I'd like to put together some material that describes the local scene — from a radio/cycling viewpoint. Let me know if there is something I can do to assist from down-under.

73,

—Jules Corben, VK2EXT

2/44 Herbert St

Oakley, NSW 2223 Australia

...Tired of having your training rollers wearing off the latex on your new tires? Take a thumbnail size amount of liquid soap and rub into each roller until dry. (Caution! — avoid the belt tracks).

—Herbert Perrine, WD8DLQ, Dayton, Ohio